Fate Lends a Talon Hand to Reindeer Man

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Fate Lends a Talon Hand to Reindeer Man

by dandelion_wishes

Summary

How kid!Will comes to live with wendigo!Hannibal.

Notes

This fic is based the fourth chapter called Reindeer Man, from the fic called Naughty or Nice Gift Exchange Drabbles; it's not really necessary to read the other story to understand this one. It is a nice set up for this one. Enjoy! No Beta

Chapter 1

“Mr Graham aren’t you concerned about the subject matter of Will’s drawings?” asks Ms Brewster. She is a portly woman with brunette hair and eyes hidden by glasses. She has a pleasant smile and genuine interest in her students. She is the first teacher that has made the effort to connect with Will.

Bill Graham rubs his mouth looking at the drawings piled in front of him. He picks up one that has Will drawn in blue shorts with a red striped t shirt. The figure has curly hair, glasses and big smile. There is a lemon yellow sun in the sky along with a blue circle for a lake. Will is holding a fishing pole and the hand of a “monster”. His skin is inky black with a huge rack of horns growing out of his head. His eyes are not there. They are left white. The creature has a huge smile with long pointed teeth like knives.

The man sighs as his blue eyes drift from the drawing to the concerned face of Ms Brewster.The clears his throat of thick mucus from smoking and drinking to excess.

“Ms Brewster. Will has a vivid imagination. He’s had strange ideas for imaginary friends before like this one time the had a raccoon friend that owned a dog treat store…” The man is interrupted by Ms Brewster.

“I understand that Mr Graham. Highly intelligent children tend to have active imagination. Sensitive children,like Will, even more so...but..he’s acting aggressively toward the other children.”

“Those bullies you mean. Will is just sticking up for himself is all. He hasn’t hurt anyone, has he?”

“No, not yet.But..how are things all right at home? Do you need assistance with Will? There are numerous resources the state provide to help with psychological problems….”

Bill holds up his hand for that woman to stop her yapping. His face pinches at the onslaught of good intentioned “help”, she offers. Everyone is always giving him advice about how to

“fix” his son. Will is not broken. He maybe a little cracked but not broken.

“Will doesn’t have….mental problems...ever time Will does somethin’ a little different....at every goddamn school..someone has their panties in a wad over it! I appreciate your concern but **Will is fine**...**we are fine**..I don’t need no help with providing for my child. Now if you’ll excuse me..I got work to do..”

Bill shoves his hands in his jean pockets as he walks briskly through the door and down the school corridor. He shoves open the door leading to the outside taking all his anger out on an inanimate object. The man thinks about what Ms Brewster has said. He recalls what all Will’s teacher’s seem to say. Smart, highly intelligent, rich imagination, sensitive, anti social, awkward with other students, no friends….the list goes on and on, a compliment then a negative comment is added. Like Bill doesn’t know his son is a damn sight smarter than all these teachers put together. So the is shy...fuck..he ain’t the first or the last to be.

It’s not the boy’s fault he is stuck with a poor mechanic for a father. If his momma was around things would have been different but the bitch left. Bill does the best he can. He can’t give what he ain’t got. It seems, to Bill, he ain’t got much left after they were abandoned by his wife. The man takes in a suddering breath.

He huffs it out before the man opens his truck’s door. The truck door creaks and moans as Bill throws himself behind the steering wheel. He pulls out one of his cowboy killers lighting it with disdain for a habit he wants to break, but can’t. He spews out a plum of smoke through his nose as he turns the ignition over. Bill rolls down the window as he putters down the road toward the house they are renting.

Bill has been dreading telling Will they were moving again. This was longest stay they have had in awhile. His boy seems to like it here.After he arrives home, Bill sits Will down explaining to him that his job has ended. Bill has a new one in Virginia Beach. Will eyes’s fills with tears as he asks if they can’t stay here just a while longer.

He’ll miss Hannibal. Hannibal will miss him. Bill sighs looking into Will’s red rimmed blue eyes. The man puts a hand awkwardly on the boy’s shoulder trying to comfort.He explains to

Will since Hannibal is an imaginary friend, he'll follow Will to their new house. Will insists that Hannibal is real. The reindeer man will be upset if Will moves.

Bill's patience wears thin as he flounders for what to tell Will to reassure him. Will's father says that this was the way of the world. They can't stay here for a friend that doesn't really exist or even for one who may exist. They have to make money so Will can eat and have clothes. They are moving at the end of the week. Will ducks his head running out the door into the woods. Bill sighs watching his boy disappear into the woods. He takes out another cigarette.

Will crashes into the woods as tears stream down his cheeks. Hannibal is real. The reindeer man is the best friend the boy has ever had. Why doesn't his dad believe him? The boy stumbles down to a walk before going to the spot he often meets Hannibal for their conversations. Will sits on a fallen log. His small chin in his hands. His head is tipped toward the grown. Will hears Hannibal before the sees him.

Stealth is one of the many valuable attributes of all wendigos, Hannibal however makes as much noise as he can when he comes to see his William. The human boy is easily startled. Hannibal enjoys the fluttering of his prey's heart but in his human's case, the wendigo finds no pleasure in it.

Hannibal smells sorrow and anxiety emanating from his boy. His brow furrows in concern. In his calm and smooth voice he asks Will why the boy is upset. Will digs his sneakered foot into the soil of the forest floor. Will wipes his face while he tries not to cry. He's trying to brave and strong. Hannibal keeps telling him to be brave. But some days it's harder than others, his lower lip quivers. The boy feels Hannibal's hand on his head. The reindeer man strokes his curls as he waits for Will to answer. The boy gulps.

"We...are..are..moving away."

Will looks up at Hannibal as the reindeer man crouches down beside him.

"I don't wanna leave…" his voice cracks as Will finally lets the tears and emotions overwhelm him. The boy throws his arms around Hannibal's neck as he sobs.

Hannibal feels anger tap at the back of his mind. The wendigo keeps it there not to upset William any more. His boy understands and feels emotions so easily. The wendigo sighs. He has been contemplating taking Will to live with him for a few months now. It seems his taloned hand has been forced into action.

Fate lends it's own talon hand to the wendigo. Hannibal is standing outside watching Bill Graham, who is inside the living room, he falls asleep with whiskey in one hand and a cigarette in the other.Hannibal watches as the cigarette falls onto the cheap carpet of the floor smoldering. Then flames burst running the length of the rug. Hannibal watches to see if Bill wakes up or the fire alarm wakes William up. There is no fire alarm blaring even though the air is quickly filling with smoke. The flames circle around the old brown barker recliner.

Hannibal enters the house with inhuman speed as he bounds up the stairs. Will has woken up but is coughing violently with each breath of the toxic smoke. The boy clutches Winston as his eyes water. Hannibal hears Will calling for his father a few times. Then his heart leaps with joy when he hears his boy calling for him.

Hannibal opens the door into Will’s room. The wendigo grabs a blanket wrapping Will into it.Then he lifts the boy into his arms. Hannibal jumps the stairs landing at the bottom. Bill Graham is on the floor coughing surrounded by flames. The man looks up, his eyes widen as he sees Hannibal through the smoky haze. The monster is just like the picture Will drew! The monster holds his son! Bill reaches out his hand in Will’s direction. Will doesn't see him because his face is in Hannibal’s chest. Hannibal stares at the man on the floor for a moment before fleeing out the door.

Bill drops his head as his lungs fill with smoke. He falls to the floor eyes closing.

Chapter 2

For centuries wendigos were worshiped as gods, human sacrifice the tribute they demanded from their disciples. When Christianity rose up, it struck down the wendigo religion to be hidden in darkness. The wendigo became the monster in the dark who could be appeased with human sacrifice by the faithful.Better to do this than lose the whole village to the insatiable appetite of the monster. As man pursued intellect over spirituality, the wendigo became legend and myth. To survive, the wendigo evolved into shape shifters. For the majority of their life, the wendigo man lives in plain sight of the human population. This evolutionary trait has allowed them to hunt for their preferred form of substance..human meat.

Some places became havens for wendigo to congregate and populate their dwindling community. Most of them preferred to stay in the eastern European countries where tradition is observed. Some restless wendigos, who craved adventure found their way to the Americas. There are small clusters of them spread throughout the continent. Hannibal is an usual wendigo who prefers his own company the majority of the time. He also has a troubling fondness and fascination with humans. His uncle often lectured him on the foolhardiness of this hobby. Even as a youngling, he would collect human pets. Hannibal played with them till he broke their mind and then their bodies before devouring them.

In human form, Hannibal is a wealthy man with no heirs or mate. The wendigo does as he pleases. It pleases him to travel and hunt. Hannibal owns several properties and housing for when he travels to hunt. The wendigo takes the boy to the cabin he owns within the forest.

Hannibal hears snuffling and small coughs from Will who has his head buried in his neck. His face is covered in soot and he smells of smoke. Once inside, Hannibal places Will onto the iron framed bed. Making sure Will will stays put,he goes to get a glass of water and wet wash cloth. Will blinks looking around. He sees the shape of Hannibal approaching him with a glass of water.

“Here William drink this.”

Will obediently drinks coughing after a few sips.

“Where’s my daddy?” he rasps from his smoky vocal cords.

Hannibal sighs debating what to tell the boy. Will holds his breath before a hiccup comes out as a sob. Will looks up at the wendigo, he is trembling from cold and shock. The boy’s eyes are watery. ‘He knows.’ Hannibal thinks to himself. ‘Clever boy.’

“Where’s daddy Hannibal? I’m scared.”

Hannibal softly shushes the boy enveloping into his arms. The wendigo places his chin on Will’s head as he rocks him.

“I am afraid I couldn’t save him,William. I am truly sorry.”

The wendigo could have saved Bill Graham but he didn’t. Hannibal thought of Will as his. No one was taking his William away from him. Bill Graham was not a bad parent,per se, more like a neglectful one.The man loved his booze and cigarettes more than his son. The responsibility for a gifted child like William took time and attention to develop. Hannibal would bring out the best in his boy.

Will lips quivers as he lets his tears flow. Questions tumble in his mind, they fall over each other in a cycle. *What had started the fire? Where is he going to stay? Will doesn’t know where his mother lives or how to contact her.* After a few minutes he sniffles and coughs. The boy wipes his nose with the back of his hand.

“What’s going to happen to me?”

“Would you like to live with me?” Hannibal asks

“At..at the North Pole..with Santa...and the other reindeer? I can fix stuff! Dad says I have a talent for engines like him..” his voice trails off as his face scrunches at the memory of his father.

He remembers those lazy days in the summer, when he would let Will help him.His dad smiles at him and ruffles his hair.Bill's hands are oil and tobacco stained. They are rough from manual labor but gentle when he handles Will. *A chip off the old block.* Is whispered from the back of Will's memories.New tears fall from blue eyes hitting the bed blankets. A hand rubbing Will's back brings him away from his memories to the present.

"No. I am afraid that would be too cold for you. But I have a place nearby that we could live at."

"Won't Santa be mad if you don't go back home?"

"No. Santa will understand that I am needed here with you."

Will chews his lips looking around the quiet cabin. He's not sure what to say. The boy wants to live with the reindeer man. Can a reindeer keep a person? he wonders.

"What's wrong William?"

"Can..can...a reindeer be a daddy to a little boy? Won't people try to take me away from you?"

Hannibal thumbs away the boy's tears.

"I can show you some special magic. It must be our secret because if anyone knew...well...I couldn't keep you. Can you do this for me...for us?"

The boy nods his eyes wide in anticipation. Hannibal gets up from the bed walking into another room. Will leans forward trying to see what the wendigo is doing. The reindeer man reappears a few minutes later. The wendigo is wearing a burgundy sweater and some fleece

pants. Will giggles putting his hand over his mouth. Hannibal looks at will with a question on his face.

“You look silly wearing clothes Hannibal.” the boy smiles giggling some more.

“Ahhh...but you’ll see I won’t look silly for long.”

The reindeer man begins to shimmer. He looks like a picture on an old T.V. set that needs adjusting. Hannibal seems to squiggle and shake. Then when he comes into focus, he looks like a regular man. The man is tall with graying blonde hair, crimson eyes, high cheekbones and thin lips. Will gasps putting his hand over his mouth. The boy stares even though he knows it’s impolite. The boy can’t help himself. Hannibal walks quietly over to the bed sitting down once more.

“Whoa! Can all the reindeer do that?”

“No just me.”

Will reaches out his small hand touching Hannibal’s face. The boy feels the warmth of his skin and the stubble on Hannibal’s chin. He moves closer as Will slides his hands up to Hannibal's hair. The wendigo has an amused look on his face as he allows the gentle exploration.

“Where did your antlers go? Your so soft.”

“They disappear but will come back when I change back.”

“I think...I..”

“Yes?”

“I think I like you better as a reindeer man.” the boy says shyly.

Hannibal laughs.

“Really. Why is that? Am I an ugly human?”

The boy blushes. Shakes his head no.

“You look just fine..I don’t know...you’re not you.I like the seeing the real you under your person suit. ”

Will ducks his head. The boy hopes the reindeer man isn’t mad at him. Hannibal’s eyebrows raise at the statement. How remarkable..the child understands the importance of showing strength and power. That his William prefers his true form to the illusion he has to assume is breathtaking. Oh to be seen and understood brings a lump to Hannibal’s throat. He coughs to dislodge it.

“I prefer my true form but sometimes people don’t understand. Well young man, it is time to get you into a bath.”

Will nods his head and sniffs Winston. The boy holds the stuffed dog out to Hannibal.

“I think Winston needs a bath too.”

“Yes I imagine he does. I’ll put him in the washing machine. I’ll run the water for your bath as well.”

Will watches Hannibal carry Winston out of the room by the ear. The wendigo holds him in front of himself crinkling his nose at the smell.

Will sits listening the lull of the bath water flowing into the tube. The boy sighs. Will is tired...he is tired from being woken in the middle of the night; he tired from all the emotions he has bombarding him; he is tired from all the thinking his mind is doing.Maybe in the morning, he'll wake to his daddy calling him for breakfast. Maybe this is a nightmare.

Will purses his lips together. The boy knows this is not a dream. His daddy is gone and he now lives with the reindeer man.

Maybe he'll get to meet Santa one day.

"William!"

"Coming Hannibal."

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